REMARKS

Claims 1, 5, 8 and 11 are presented for consideration, with Claims 1, 8 and 11 being independent.

The independent claims have been amended to further distinguish Applicants' invention from the cited art. Claims 2, 6, 7, 12, 13 and 26-29 have been cancelled.

Claims 1, 2, 5-8, 11-13and 26-29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over Xiong '265 in view of Shum '855 and Teo '413. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 relates to an image synthesis method comprising an input step of inputting a plurality of image data representing a plurality of images, a placement information generating step for generating placement information about horizontal and vertical placement direction of the plurality of images, and a placement information obtaining step for obtaining the placement information about a plurality of images in which adjacent images have a common subject region. As amended, Claim 1 provides a setting step of automatically selecting and setting one mapping mode out of a plurality of mapping modes, with each mapping mode corresponding to a different mapping surface, without a user intervening to determine the mapping mode or the corresponding mapping surface, in accordance with the horizontal and vertical placement direction of the plurality of images having a common subject region obtained in the placement information obtaining step. In addition, a synthesis step combines the plurality of images by using the mapping mode set in the setting step, a changing step changes the

mapping mode, and a generating step issues, when an image formed by changing the mapping mode does not comply with a predetermined condition set in accordance with the mapping mode, a warning and generates and displays a synthesized image in accordance with the predetermined condition. The warning is issued in a case in which the synthesized image exceeds a predetermined angle of view while simultaneously generating and displaying the synthesized image within the predetermined range of viewing angle.

In accordance with Applicants' claimed invention, a high performance image synthesis image is provided.

As discussed in the previous Amendment of April 11, 2005, the primary citation to Xiong relates to a method for aligning rectilinear images in 3D through projective registration and calibration. The Office Action takes the position that Xiong teaches an input step, a placement information generating step and a placement information obtaining step as set forth in Claim 1 of Applicants' invention.

The secondary citation to Shum relates to an interactive construction of 3D models from panoramic images, and is relied upon primarily for allegedly issuing a warning when a synthesized image exceeds a predetermined angle of view.

The tertiary citation to Teo relates to a method for creating a 3D panorama from 3D rectilinear images. The Office Action relies on Teo to teach a step of automatically setting one mapping mode out of a plurality of mapping modes, each corresponding to a different

mapping surface, without a user intervening to determine the mapping mode or the corresponding mapping surface, and to teach setting of the mapping mode in accordance with the horizontal and vertical placement direction of the plurality of images having a common subject region obtained in the placement information obtaining step.

It is respectfully submitted, however, that the amendments to Claim 1 setting forth the setting step of automatically "selecting" and setting a mapping mode out of a plurality of mapping modes serves to further distinguishes Applicants' invention from the cited art. In this regard, Teo is not understood to automatically select and set one mapping mode out of a plurality of mapping modes. To the contrary, it is submitted that any selecting of the mapping mode in Teo is in response to a user's input. See, for example, column 7, lines 34-41 and column 8, lines 38-46.

Furthermore, clarification of the comments in the Office Action attributed to Shum is respectfully requested, as Shum does not include Figures 15A-15B, 16A-16B or provide, in column 23-24, the teaching attributed to it (see page 12, paragraph g of Office Action).

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the proposed combination of Xiong, Shum and Teo, even if proper, still fails to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention.

Independent Claims 8 and 11 relate to an image synthesis apparatus and a computer readable storage medium, respectively, and are submitted to be patentable over the cited art for at least the same reasons set forth with respect to Claim 1.

Furthermore, Claim 8 is further distinguishable from the cited art by its recitation of display means for displaying a cuttable rectangular region without a margin in the synthesized image. On this point, in a discussion of Claim 5, the Office Action asserts on page 15 that Xiong teaches how to align images more precisely by changing the coordinates for positioning an image, citing Figure 12. It is respectfully submitted, however, that Figure 12 in Xiong is understood to conceptually illustrate a virtual reality space showing images 1210 tangent to a viewing sphere 1220. Accordingly, it is submitted that this feature of Applicants' invention, as set forth in independent Claim 8 as well as dependent Claim 5, serves to further distinguish Applicants' invention from the cited art.

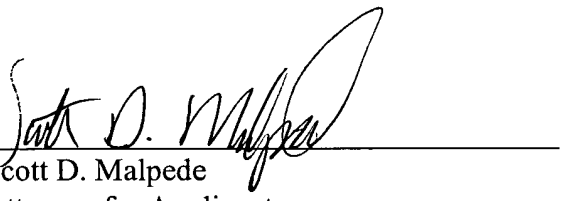
Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under §103 is respectfully requested.

Accordingly, it is submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in independent Claims 1, 8 and 11 is patentable over the cited art. In addition, dependent Claim 5 set forth additional features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of this application is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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